

The North End of Pooh
A Children's Sermon Written and Digitally Presented by Marsha L. Nolf
First Presbyterian Church 1793 of Washington, PA
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"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain
thee. . . ." Psalms 55.22.

Boys and girls, "Do you know the stories of Winnie-the-Pooh?" Oh, how I loved *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) and *The House at Pooh Corner* (1928). The author of these books is A.A. Milne. When I was your age, I read and re-read the stories of Winnie-the-Pooh and his friends—Christopher Robin, Rabbit, Eeyore, Tigger, Owl, and Piglet.

Now, my favorite Pooh story is titled: "Pooh Goes Visiting and Gets Into a Tight Place." In this story Pooh does his morning stoutness exercises and then goes to visit Rabbit. He arrives at Rabbit's hole just in time for a mid-morning snack. Rabbit, a reluctant host, asks Pooh, "Honey or condensed milk with your bread?" Pooh enthusiastically answers: "Both . . . but don't bother about the bread, please."

Pooh eats all of Rabbit's honey and condensed milk. He eats so much that not only are his paws sticky, but the book says that his voice is sticky, too! Finally, he thanks Rabbit and attempts to climb out of Rabbit's hole. He gets halfway out and realizes that he is stuck in the hole. Pooh had eaten too much. His north end made it outside Rabbit's hole, but his south end remained dangling in Rabbit's home.

Christopher Robin, Pooh's best friend, discovers Pooh's predicament. Christopher says, "Silly old Bear . . . we shall have to wait for you to get thin again." Christopher figured that it would take about one week for Pooh to get thin. Pooh began to sigh, and then found he could not because he was so tightly stuck; and a tear rolled down his cheek, as he said: "Then would you read a Sustaining Book, such that would help and comfort a Wedged Bear in Great Tightness?"

So for a week, at the north end of Pooh, Christopher Robin read a sustaining book. A book that helped and comforted his friend. Finally, when one week had past, all of Pooh's friends, including Piglet, Owl, Tigger, and even doleful Eeyore, pulled and pulled on Pooh's sticky paws. They pulled him free! Pooh thanked them and went humming down the road. What a silly bear! What a good story!

I have kept thinking about that story. In particular, I began to wonder about "a Sustaining Book, such that would help and comfort a Wedged Bear in Great Tightness." I began to ask myself: "Marsha, what book did Christopher Robin read to his friend Pooh?" I looked at the book's illustrations, but they were of no help.

Well, boys and girls, I think that I have discovered the answer! I think that Christopher Robin read the Bible to Pooh. After all, the Bible is a sustaining book; that is, a book that strengthens our spirits and comforts us.

In your life, I think that you will experience times when you are "wedged in a Great Tightness." No, that does not mean that you are going to get stuck in a rabbit's hole. It does mean that maybe your tightness will be a bad habit, an unhappy relationship, an unsatisfactory job, or an unexpected illness. During those times, maybe you will remember the story of "Pooh Goes Visiting" and be reminded that you can turn to a sustaining and comforting book. You can turn to the Bible.

Prayer: Dear God, help these children to remember the lyrics to the song that they learned at Kids' Night: "THE B-I-B-L-E, yes that's the book for me. I stand alone on the word of God. The B-I-B-L-E." Help the children to remember that the Bible is sustaining book; that is, a book that will help them when they are "wedged in a Great Tightness." Amen

Quotations are from: Milne, A.A. *Winnie-the-Pooh*. New York: Dutton, 1988, c1926.



**"Then would you read a sustaining book such as would help and comfort
a wedged bear in great tightness?"**

Illustrator: E.H. Shepard